



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

copy of it to each member of the Modern Language Association. This generous promise, which was warmly received, has in the meantime been fulfilled.]

6. "A Study and Notation of American Vowels." By Professor E. H. Babbitt, of Columbia College.

Professor C. H. Grandgent :

We cannot expect to have a final scheme of vowel notation which shall be both simple and scientifically correct, until we understand better than we do the nature of vowel sounds. The plan of Jespersen is accurate but exceedingly complicated. Other systems in common use are easy and practical, but do not take into account all the different factors that enter into the production of vowels.

I am very much interested in the experiments begun by Mr. Lloyd, of Liverpool, who has developed a theory of speech sounds, according to which the distinctive character of every vowel is due to the relation between the pitches of two mouth-cavities, one before the tongue and one behind it. He has carried out his experiments successfully for the front vowels, but has not completed them for all. Until his work is done, and perhaps even longer, we shall have to put up with temporary schemes ; and the method proposed by Mr. Babbitt is certainly better, for American dialect work, than anything else I have ever seen. It enables the investigator to represent clearly and with sufficient accuracy, on a square inch of paper, the entire vowel system of any American speaker.

Mr. Babbitt spoke incidentally of American nasal vowels. I should like to say a word with regard to American and French nasals. Those of us who have taught French are aware that those Americans who nasalize to the greatest extent in their own language are the ones who find it hardest to pronounce the French nasals. The reason is this: American nasality is due to closure of the mouth and inertia of the soft palate. Most Americans speak with the soft palate hanging down a little, leaving a small opening into the nasal passage, and with their mouths almost shut, so that most of the air is forced up through this narrow crack and comes out of the nostrils. That gives the stifled nasal quality with which we are familiar. The French nasals, however, are pronounced with the mouth wide open and the soft palate drawn far forward, so that the air, coming up from the larynx, goes freely into the nasal passage, arouses the resonance of the nasal cavity, and then escapes fully as much through the mouth as through the nose. Americans, not in the habit of using the soft palate, experience difficulty in drawing the veil far enough forward to give the full nasal resonance ; and, at the same time, they find it hard to make the mouth-aperture large

enough to produce that open quality which characterizes the French nasal vowels. The correctness of this explanation (which is not new) has recently been proved by Mr. Weeks, of the University of Michigan, who has invented an instrument for measuring the movements of the soft palate.

The discussion was continued by Professors A. M. Elliott, and E. H. Magill.

MORNING SESSION (Thursday, December 28).

The President called the Association to order at 10 o'clock.

7. "*King Lear*: a Study in Shakespeare's method of Dramatic Construction." By Professor Thomas R. Price, of Columbia College.

Remarks upon this paper were made by Professors H. E. Greene, and E. H. Magill.

8. "Anglo-Saxon Dægmæl." By Dr. Frederick Tupper, Jr., of Wells College.

This paper was discussed by the President of the Association, Professor F. A. March.

9. "A Study of the Religious and Political Significance of Langland's *Piers the Plowman*." By Miss Elizabeth Deering Hanscom, of Yale University. [Read by title.]

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Association convened at 3 o'clock.

10. "The Life and Works of Charles Sealsfield (Carl Postl)." By Dr. A. B. Faust, of Johns Hopkins University.

Professor M. D. Learned :

This study of Charles Sealsfield by Dr. Faust is one of a series of similar studies now going on. I think the impression has been abroad among